# The Beauty of Sexuality: A Gift and a Challenge

**Gratitude** 

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## Introduction

As human beings we are endowed with sexuality, a reality that goes beyond mere sexual appetites and desires. This implies a gift and a challenge. A gift insofar as sexuality is inherent in us and which we are called to constantly receive and to give; a challenge insofar as it is a constant "going out" of ourselves in order for the gift to be fully appreciated. This gift -challenge dyad will be understood in terms of sexuality as communication: entering into a relationship, the seeking the good, making the person whole. Our aim is to break the shame screen and as Trobish states: allow the

partners to have the ability to "stand in front of each

# A Sexual God

When God created man, He created "man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." This shift of pronouns from him to them has baffled many theologians. When this verse (Gen 1:27) is read in terms of sexuality it establishes the ground as to how human beings are to relate to one another. Human sexuality becomes a crucial element in learning who is the sexual human. In Hebrew, 'adam' refers to humanity not to male perse. Barth calls the "I-Thou" relationship which constitutes the essence of the imago Dei (image of God): A "creative complementariness."

God himself inaugurated sexuality. It is part of God's divine and perfect will. The human person is a wholesome being, a psychophysical unity. Any notions that the body is evil, or worse that any expressions of the body pleasures, including sexual pleasures "are contaminated" (Davidson, 1988). Davidson furthers that both Gen 1 and Gen 2 affirm that God's original plan has seen sexuality as "wholesome, beautiful and good", "experienced between spouses without fear, without inhibitions, without shame and embarrassment." It is only through sin, that this perfect image of man's sexuality has been tarnished.

# 5 Functions of Sexuality: (Dominian, 1993)

1) Conforming Significance Through the sexual act, the **body is communicating**. In the act, the two bodies achieve a oneness which goes beyond the physical and biological oneness. In experiencing erotic A Relationship Confirming pleasure, the couple reaches a "climax of exquisite pleasure and relief of tension." sustainment Such a union provides the canvas of the language between the couple. Thus, viewing sex as only a bodily pleasure fails to see that couples who are in love reach this pleasure in addressing each other as persons. The act is a prototype of all forms of unions from the simplest to the divine 2) A Sense of Gratitude Healing

Through the sexual act, the couple appreciate what they receive from each other. **The** act itself is a 'thank you' to each other, even without words. Very often this gratitude is expressed through saturated silence. It is this same gratitude which expresses the desire for repetition, the desire to experience again the joy of their relationship. Implicitly the call is full of hope in that the partner shares this same feeling and responds in a similar manner. Since the act itself is of giving and receiving, fears and shames need to be overcome.

#### 3) Healing

This mutual communication has "specific healing qualities." No mature couple can escape quarrelling and misunderstandings, which often hurt the persons involved. Through communicating oneself, one is asking an apology and the other is forgiving, thus the act itself can extinguish any hurt and pain which words alone fail to **heal**. "I feel more love during make-up sex because I know that no matter what happened, our love has survived it." (Ben-Zeev, 2003)

#### 4) Confirming Sexual Identity

In the act itself, each person affirms the other that s/he is enjoying the gift received, con**firming appreciation of the other body** and her femininity / his masculinity. It is a mutual confirmation of the sexual identity. The act communicates that one "recognizes, wants and appreciates (the other) as a person" This appreciation of the personhood is key. Before one becomes a sexual being, s/he is a person. Without such affirmation, the act will be perceived as reducing in the meaning.

5) A Relationship Sustainment

It is in the act itself which the couple reinforces the relationship. The act, "singularly (and in) the most powerful way" (Ben-Zeev, 2003) confirms their willingness to further and deepen their relationship. Thus, the act begets life within the couple. "Life and love are linked and are both contained in this activity."In begetting metaphysical life, the relationship overflows with meaning.

# Towards a comprehensive understanding of Sexuality

**Confirming** 

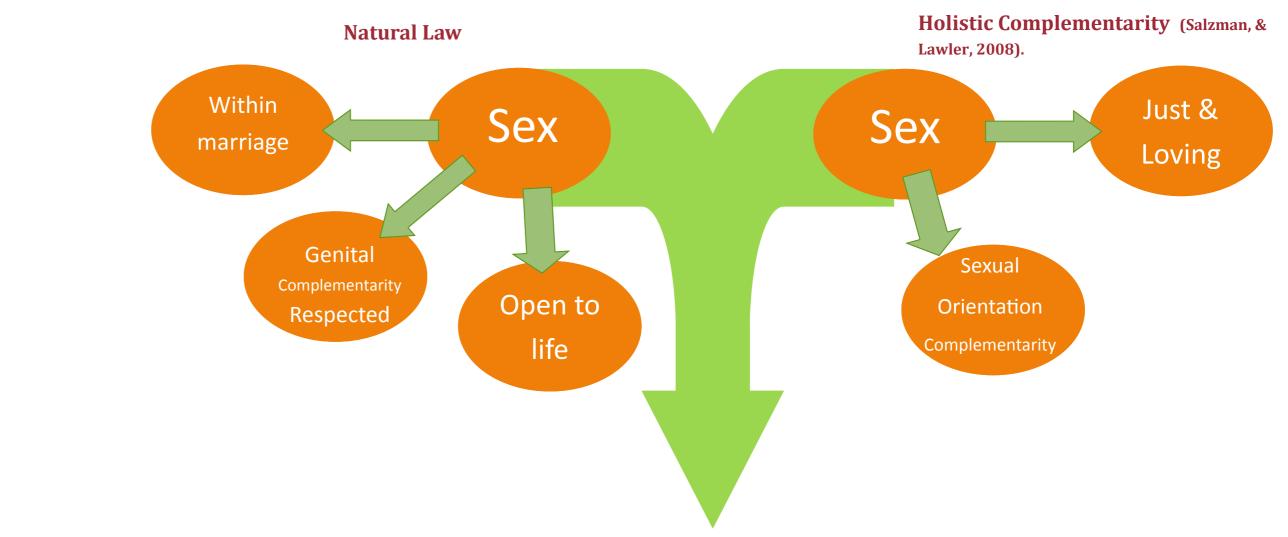
Sexual

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A more Comprehensive way of Valuing Sexuality (Marx, 2015)



### Conclusion

This review sought to reverse the negative idea usually associated with the Christian understanding of sexuality. Rather sex is valued as a life long activity which aims at humanising us evermore: thus: entering into a relationship and self communicating.

The value of sex, when seen through the life-long bond of marriage, is evident when "the two become one flesh", thus being united both physically and more importantly metaphysically. It is in this metaphysical frame which one can interpret sex as self communication. It is in this framework whereby each person indulges in self-giving and out loving the other person. A relationship of giving is what the Church teaches. This view on sex differs from the selfindulgence and egoistic view many promote. Sex should not only be about receiving but also about giving. Dominion says, this capacity of sex goes beyond the biological generative, it gives life "in a more than biological sense", it "spawns gratitude." The role of sex in strengthening a couple's sexual identity, enriches the sense of com-

mitment. It is in this light, whereby a fuller understanding of sexuality enriches the society itself.

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